



NEWSLETTER

Servas South America

December 2005

number 2

Editor: Pedro Puente R.

English translation: Susan Ovington.

EDITORIAL

The publication of our first Newsletter (June 05) pleased and encouraged the contributors and readers of our region. My thanks to the former for their contributions and to readers for their opinions and their praise of the team. To this I want to add additional thanks for the English version done by Susan Ovington of Servas USA (San Francisco, California), and recently the French version done by Michele Querrioux of Servas Belgium (Brussels). I recognize the effort that this totally volunteer work entailed and I am moved by it. Finally, special thanks to Roberto Borenstein, South America Area Coordinator, for his support through the different stages of the production of the Newsletter.

MANY THANKS, SERVAS FRIENDS!

As I said in the first Newsletter, this is a tool for integration and development of Servas in South America. Making this a valid medium is the responsibility of its Editor and collaborators; that is our role. For us, the responsibility does not end with putting together the Newsletter; the goal is met after publication when all Servas members receive it. For this purpose, we use the available and immediate method of e-mail addresses, which we get from the host lists.

For the distribution stage we had more than 600 addresses in 9 countries, without counting those in Brazil, which were sent by the Area Coordinator. It was good to know that there were groups where 95% of the addresses were current. In other areas we have to suppose that only the addresses of the leaders are up to date, because the majority of the addresses came back, and the few who supposedly received the Newsletter did not confirm having gotten it, although we asked that they send us a message saying that they received it.

This situation was foreseeable; it has been a growing problem in some national groups; their inaction will cause the few hosts to lose interest and we will not longer be able to count on them. This puts in danger the survival of the national

groups; so we need a change in the attitude of the responsible leaders. It is evident that they at present don't have a plan. It seems that their term of service to Servas has ended or that they need to have a break and let go of their responsibilities in order to let others take on the job, and if there is no replacement the next step is to give the responsibility to the Area Coordinator or ask for help from another national group.

Continuing with the subject of distribution, the principle is that **EVERY MEMBER OF SERVAS SHOULD BE INFORMED**, and it is up to us to make that happen. The existing system does not permit us to reach Servas travelers directly, because we don't have a List of members who are travelers. We need to have such a list in order to be able to reach them, to invite them to participate in different activities in the region, and above all for them to receive information. Only thus could we motivate them to become Servas hosts and not just to be temporary members who drop out once their trip is finished.

This is a theme that should be handled by EXCO or brought up at the next General Assembly of Servas International, so that any member can get personal information about a traveler. We also need the statistics. If a traveler does not become a host, it may be because we have not made them aware of all their rights, such as: to be informed, to be on the List, to participate in elections or to be elected, etc. We can't like what we don't know.

In conclusion, looking around our region, we see hosts who find themselves really left on their own and forgotten, without having information about what is going on in Servas. It is counterproductive to insist on this theme because of irritating the people I allude to and for the possible reactions that may result now or later; if this system does not change it is most probable that the leaders of yesterday and today will also be those of tomorrow.

Pedro Puente

WORDS FROM THE AREA COORDINATOR - SOUTH AMERICA

Four hundred years ago, Miguel de Cervantes published the book which revolutionized western literature, with two of the most famous characters in history, Quijote and Sancho. Critics today speak of the relevance of the romance of the Knight with the Sad Face, who went mad after reading books about knighthood and went forth in the world seeking adventures. The epoch in which Cervantes lived in Spain was a time of uncertainty, crises, plague, poverty, corruption, religious excess, cruelty and loss of political influence for the country on the international scale. Time of uncertainty? Crises? Plague? Poverty? Corruption? Religious excess? Cruelty? Loss of political influence? I look around me and I see all that.

Many times, working in Servas, I have felt like a Don Quijote. In my mind there exists a constant struggle between reality and fantasy, between the possible and the impossible, between dreams and madness, between deception and certainty. And also between gentleness and hardness.

In this first year of serving as Area Coordinator, I have met various characters who existed in the work of Cervantes. I met windmills and giants, that tried to turn me from my ethical ideals. I met the priest who ordered the burning of the knight's books and of the archives containing the history of Servas in South America. I met nobles living in luxurious palaces with closed doors. But fortunately I met Sancho, who helped me to keep my feet on the ground and enabled me to go forward. And I had the good fortune to meet along the way several other Quijotes who, all together, had the courage to share their ideas and to continue dreaming, at the same time as they lived their dreams. Each meeting with a new Quijote is food and air to continue forward.

We are now in December, 2005. I look back and compare the present situation of Servas South America with the situation in December, 2004. Without doubt, we have progressed. In Argentina, the members in Rosario have shown us how to carry out the program of Servas Youth for language study. The members in Bariloche are giving us an example of how to transform the Servas dream into a beautiful reality, through the youth meeting in Patagonia in 2006. In **Brazil**, the organizational work done by the Sao Paulo group also serves today as a base of support for other regions. In **Chile**, a work group brought Servas Chile back to an integral

level of functioning. In **Colombia**, the printing of the new list shows an increase of the number of hosts in Bogota. In **Ecuador**, Servas has come back to life, with a network of hosts in four cities. In **Paraguay** there is renewed hope of strengthening the local Servas group, through the printing of an updated list of hosts. In **Peru**, Servas again started functioning normally after Exco's official recognition of one national group. In **Uruguay**, Servas reached the end of 2005 with a stronger leadership group. In **Venezuela**, by the end of the year the National Secretary was maintaining more of a dialogue with the Area Coordinator. There are still two adventures (using the vocabulary of Don Quijote) which could not be completed in 2005: issuing a new list of hosts in **Bolivia** and resolving the internal conflict in Servas **Colombia** between the National Secretary and the Deputy. We will resolve that in 2006. Let the love for Dulcinea serve as inspiration.

For the coming year, I intend to follow the same goals which I proposed in 2005. I copy below part of the message which I sent to key persons in South America before the election for Area Coordinator (October, 2004) when someone asked what the candidates stood for:

“As a goal I propose to work for a more dynamic Servas in South America. A Servas where people (coordinators as well as volunteers, and also hosts and travelers) are better informed about what is going on within Servas. With more information they can do more and make better decisions.

I propose to work for better communication among us. I would like there to be a South American newsletter, to be sent by e-mail to all the South American members. In the state of Sao Paulo we are doing one and it is proving to be a good means of communication.

I would also like to work toward greater closeness between Servas groups. Let's have more sharing of good experiences. And let's be open to discuss and resolve existing conflicts. I think we can try to develop a broader Servas point of view. And one that is more peaceful.

I plan to work toward understanding the needs of each Servas group, and help to establish with each national group a realistic development plan. We should also try to understand better the numbers within South America, to know what is the frequency of visits, determine where more hosts are needed, and try to increase the number of travelers. We need more contacts

between travelers and hosts. It is only this way that Servas can make sense.”

LISTS OF TRAVELERS RECEIVED BY SOUTH AMERICAN HOSTS

We ask South American hosts to send their National Secretary and the Area Coordinator (southamerica@servas.org) information about travelers they hosted during 2005:

- name of the traveler
- nationality
- month of the visit

These data will be used to make a record of the number and flow of Servas travelers in South America. This information will help us to better organize the plans for development of Servas in our continent.

Ideally, we would like this information to be sent us by January 15, 2006.

HOW OLD ARE WE?

Servas Youth mentions, in the announcement of the Patagonia/2006 event, that youth is not a question of age, but a state of the spirit. OK, but aside from the state of the spirit, what would be the average age of Servas members in South America? Answer: among the 1200 members over 18 years, the average age is around 43 years. There are approximately:

260 hosts (22%) between 18 and 30 years old
250 hosts (21%) between 31 and 40 years old
290 hosts (24%) between 41 and 50 years old
230 hosts (19%) between 51 and 60 years old
170 hosts (14%) over the age of 60.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY IN LATINA, ITALY, APRIL 2 –8, 2006

All the agenda items can be seen or downloaded from the main page of the EXCO web site: www.servas.org/siexco. From South America, 4 national groups have asked EXCO for financial assistance to send a delegate to the Assembly: Argentina, Brazil, Ecuador and Uruguay.

VOLUNTEER WORK OF SERVAS IN SOUTH AMERICA

In South America there are around 1200 people living in 700 Servas homes in 10 countries. It is estimated that 300 travelers (principally from 20 countries) visited us. And a little more than 100

South American travelers had the experience of traveling with Servas in 2004.

So, South America

- has 5% of the total number of Servas homes in the world
- has hosted around 5% of the total number of Servas travelers in the world
- has sent forth about 1.5% of the total number of Servas travelers in the world.

How can we grow from here? Servas needs more (motivated) volunteers in South America. There is so much to do in our continent. But we can become stronger only if we get more hours of volunteer work. There are many possibilities for projects that can be put into effect in South America. We can provide many possibilities for volunteer work, even for people who work at a distance. If you feel motivated to help us, please write to:

southamerica@servas.org. This invitation is open to any person or national group interested in helping us develop Servas in South America.

DO YOU KNOW THE HISTORY OF SERVAS IN YOUR COUNTRY?

We want to do research on the history of Servas in South America. If you have interesting information about your country (or region, or city) we would appreciate your sending it to: southamerica@servas.org

We are interested in receiving information such as:

- the origin
- the history (or part of the history), by decades (for example, Servas during the 50's, 60's, 70's, 80's, 90's, 00's).
- relevant incidents
- minutes of from meetings and get-togethers
- old host lists
- interesting personalities

MISSING DOCUMENTATION

To date, a year has passed since the elections for Area Coordinator, and there has not yet been a transfer of documents and files related to the leadership from 2001 to 2004 from the former Coordinator to the present Coordinator. The transfer has not taken place even after a request

from the president of Servas International. The former Coordinator recently sent a message to the National Secretary of Uruguay, her country, asking to resign as a Servas host.

NEWS FROM ARGENTINA

A GREAT MEETING FOR A GREAT YEAR

About a year ago I went with my daughter to the Fiesta del Sombrero (Hat Festival). What was it? The 2004 Year-End Meeting of Servas Argentina. I went as an Interviewer and left with the honor of being National Secretary, with a first class team: Pablo Colangelo as Deputy, Mhyrta Comes, who is an institution, in charge of stamps and lists, Beatriz Giri as Peace Secretary, and Roberto Gomez as her able assistant. At 300 kilometers from Buenos Aires, in the beautiful city of Rosario, I also had Pablo Chufeni, Coordinator of Servas Youth, who is a power house of strength and enthusiasm for Servas. The first months were complicated by the ongoing discussion about whether or not we needed a meeting of the Extraordinary General Assembly (EGA). This distracted us and took energy away from carrying out projects in our country. However, Servas Argentina was working and we were beginning to have bi-monthly meetings with and for young people. When the decision was reached to have the EGA in April 2006, we could get to work on putting together Patagonia '06, the first international meeting of Servas Youth, in the Southern Hemisphere.

We worked hard on expanding Servas in the interior of the country; we started the exchange of young people from countries speaking different languages, with much success and hopes for expansion; we carried out socio-cultural activities in the city of Buenos Aires, including a wine tasting tour. Also we had the second meeting of Servas Argentina in the city of Rosario...and much more.

This whole year of work was crowned by the 2005 Year-End Meeting, which was held on Sunday, November 20, in a country house generously offered by the parents of Pablo Colangelo. We honored one of our most beloved traditions: we had a barbeque! We had the patient work of 3 cooks: Sebastian, Julio and Daniel. Several Servas members took on the preparation of various salads. We had a brilliant sun which would have scorched us had it not been for the swimming pool in which we

could cool off and also swim, although a few opted for resting in the shade of ancient trees.

We had representatives of various cities and regions of the interior of the country, who brought their vision of possibilities of growth. We even had a Servas member from Rome, Anna.

In total, there were more than 40 people. We were happy to have the participation of young families with their children. In this meeting there were no age limits: our youngest Servas member was there, a delightful baby girl of 5 months! And also a Servas member for more than 20 years, since the time when the total number of Servas members in Argentina was no more than 12. Elida traveled more than 120 kilometers to come, along with Mari, a friend who is not a Servas member...yet, and who has 12 grandchildren and 9 great grandchildren. Those of us in between, young in age or young in spirit, had the opportunity to talk about our lives, share experiences we have had in the organization, think about things, plan for the future. We also worked on organizational details of Patagonia '06. We shared a delicious lunch, with plenty of wine, as well as laughter and joy, later we had **mate torta** (a local dessert) and other sweets. We stayed until the sun started to set. It was truly a day of peace and for peace.

Cintia Amor National Secretary

REPORT ON THE SITUATION OF PATAGONIA '06

PATAGONIA 06 is no longer a strange phrase for us and we sincerely hope it is not for you. The whole international Servas community, and especially the South American region, knows that during the third week of January we will hold the first international meeting of Servas Youth, and it promises to be the best ever.

My first encounter with Servas Youth was in Montevideo, where I had won a competition organized by Servas South America, and later I had many more Servas experiences. At the Barcelona meeting, the role of international youth coordinator was established thanks to the work of a lot of people, and today SERVAS YOUTH has a history, programs and most important of all, many plans.

I came home from Barcelona sure that we needed an international meeting of SERVAS YOUTH, and to do it in our region would be

marvelous. Thanks to Paula Falaschi from Bariloche, the city which will be the meeting site, and the lovely people of Servas Argentina, this project flowered into what it is today, PATAGONIA 06: a mystical joining of dreams and energy.

A great deal has been done, much is being done, and still more has to be done. But we already see the fruits of so many dreams turned into action. Through contacts with others, using all the means that Servas has and what we could bring to it ourselves, PATAGONIA '06 today has its own web site connected to the principal web site for Servas International. We have all the information about the meeting on: www.youth.servas.org: countries that are attending, registration forms in six languages, the agenda in English and Spanish, as well as complete instructions for everything about the event. Iain Snee, a personal friend from Servas Canada, is helping me very much with the web site, as is my friend Claudio Pacchiega, from Servas Italy.

I was in touch personally with many national secretaries, as well as with young Servas members and those who are interested in the theme of youth, and thanks to these one-to-one contacts, today we can say that we will have representation from about 20 countries at PATAGONIA 06. You can see the list on the web, and thus you'll have an excuse for visiting it.

In Bariloche the meeting will be attended by around 80 Servas people coming from all parts of the world. For me, Pablo Chufeni, it is a great source of pride to be able to say that in PATAGONIA '06 we will have the presence of all the continents, Europe, Oceania, Asia, Africa and all the Americas. I insist that this is something to be proud of.

Eighty people will come to bring their perspectives, their opinions, and above all their desire to be active in Servas. Eighty people who, without any doubt, will work together to make Servas Youth a more dynamic and stronger force within Servas.

The support of EXCO was a very strong aid, as was the commitment of so many national secretaries who have given me their support. In PATAGONIA '06 we are a team, a group of persons committed to give our time and energy to a project to which we have given birth. It would have been impossible to do this alone. Laura Ragucci is an invaluable source of

support. Cintia Amor and Pablo Colangelo from Servas Argentina have been incredibly hard working and committed to the idea since the beginning. Paulo Falaschi from Servas Bariloche has been my companion in these adventures since the start. Many others collaborate and will continue to collaborate with us, and with Servas, so that this dream that became a project may continue to grow and turn out to be what we hope of it. And that's not a little.

I believe with all my heart in the importance of this type of event. This is not just a question of tourism, of socializing, of having fun, of taking photos and being on vacation. All that takes place and it's good that it does, but it only reinforces the real goal of these meetings: we mobilize, transform ourselves, **rediscover the infinite pleasure of the task that we have ahead of us in Servas and the importance of that task.**

It is in these meetings that plans for the future take form, and that's when we can connect a face to that e-mail address that continually appears in our mail box. In that way we add enormous energy to the flow of communication and of action. **Action.** Action is my focus in Servas and it's what I want to give to Servas Youth. We have in front of us an enormous human network that is Servas, and that is ready to take on concrete actions. People around the world are ready to offer their time, their experience and their energy for a noble task, to develop intercultural respect and construct a culture of peace.

To generate ACTIVE local groups, encourage international ACTION, promote interACTION within each region or country, this is where the youthful energy is key. The distinction between young age and young energy is clear, clear to all of us, and it is toward that youthful energy, the energy that is translated into action, that Servas Youth and PATAGONIA '06 is aimed. We need to mobilize it, empower it, and use it for the work of Servas.

My strongest and most sincere affection to all of you. Know that you will be more than welcome if you want to come and that your presence will be key in the development and growth of Servas Youth. No one can replace you in giving your opinion.

Pablo Chufeni
International Coordinator, Servas Youth

READINGS FROM THE PEACE SECRETARY

All the members of the present coordinating group of Servas Argentina, when they first took office, proposed the goal of improving communication, in order to strengthen the feeling of togetherness and belonging of members of this organization. This would contribute to the common aim of creating peace through cultural and social exchanges among people and working toward the growth and expansion of the common ideals of Servas in our country.

Toward this goal, and as members of the Peace Secretariat of Servas Argentina, we wish to share with Servas members from other countries an initiative which we have carried out during 2005 and which we hope to continue and improve, as much as possible, during the coming year.

Once a month, we e-mailed to all the members of Servas Argentina brief texts on questions linked to the ideals, concerns and interests of Servas. We call these "Readings from the Peace Secretary." The subjects covered so far have been: Water Crisis (April), Women's Health Problems (May/June, along with the Latin American Day of Women's Health), Environmental Contamination from Installation of Gold Mines by Multinational Companies in Our Countries (July), Letter from Peace Poets at the Cumbre de las Americas meeting (August), and in the month of September, A Celebration of Springtime, Youth and Peace, through a poem by the Argentine poet Hamlet Lima Quintana, which seems to us an excellent description of the Servas "spirit":

SO NECESSARY

Some people need only say a word
to make hope shine as bright as roses
and only by the smile in their eyes
they invite us to travel to other worlds,
they take us on magical journeys.

Some people just by reaching out a hand
end your loneliness, set the table,
serve a meal festooned with garlands
and just by taking up a guitar
make a symphony ring within the house.

Some people only have to open their mouths
to show the depth of their soul,
they can nourish a flower, invent dreams
make the wine sing in the jar,
and act as if it were nothing

You can fall in love with life
rejecting a solitary death,
since you know that around the corner
there are such people, so necessary.

Hamlet Lima Quintana

Beatriz Giri and Roberto Gomez
Peace Secretary

MY FIRST SERVAS EXPERIENCE

I have a friend who has been in Servas for years, but although I knew that she traveled and stayed in homes of families, and also received people in her home, we never talked much about this subject. That was a part of her world, which for no special reason I did not enter.

Until, and again for no special reason, she was talking to me about her last trip, this time to Panama, she asked me if I wanted to join Servas. I confess that in the beginning I didn't like the idea of putting up people in my house, but she talked to me about the possibility of being a day host, and that interested me. So I was connected with Pablo Chufeni, to whom I gave my information. Then I called Catalina and she interviewed me. My fears returned when without my having read EXHAUSTIVELY the forms, she invited me to sign. At this point in the story I must confess that by profession I am a lawyer, so I am not used to sign any document without having read it at least twice. Evidently Caty saw the expression that I must have had and said that I could take the papers home and sign them whenever I wanted. At the same time she invited me to participate in the farewell lunch for Nayara that was also my welcome, and also the Servas meeting on June 18, 19 and 20 in Rosario. There I had the opportunity to meet Cintia, Laura, Mirta, Francisco, Pablo, Paula, Diego, along with the Rosario Servas members and we had a rewarding meeting.

The time was short but intense, and those who had come had the chance to know something of our beloved Rosario. Some people already knew the city, for others it was their first time. Rosario was decorated for the celebration of Flag Day, and I think it made a good impression. With respect to the work day, Patagonia 2006 was the main subject, and it will undoubtedly be a success; there was talk of the possibility of Iguazu 2007.

What did I retain from this experience? The feeling of being in a family. The feeling of realizing how important it is for people to sit

down together and spend time getting to know each other and to realize that Servas helps break the barriers which separate us. That we are a big family and, as Gandhi said, each friendship helps build a road toward peace.

Nélida Verdejo

NEWS FROM BOLIVIA

ALL HELP IS WELCOME

The last time that Servas Bolivia updated its list was in 2001, so it is now completely obsolete. From this list it is not possible to reach the listed hosts. The host list is the heart of the working system of Servas. A list with incorrect e-mails and telephone numbers is like a heart with blocked arteries. In order to have Servas activity the channels of communication have to be unblocked so that travelers can have access to the host profiles and can contact them directly. Servas Bolivia, through its Assistant Secretary Gustavo Molina, recently informed the EXCO list coordinator that it has 35 hosts in the whole country. Gustavo also said that at the end of this year they will have a meeting and possibly hold elections. We hope that happens.

To verify host information and prepare a list is an urgent task for Servas Bolivia. At the time when Servas Bolivia needs to make a new list, all help can be welcome.

If you can offer help to Servas Bolivia

If you know people in Bolivia

If you have friends or family in Bolivia

If you have traveled in Bolivia

If you have contacts with Bolivian organizations

If you have any time to try to find potential hosts via telephone or internet

If you can and want to participate, contact:

southamerica@servas.org

and

bolivia@servas.org.

NEWS FROM BRAZIL

CHANGE IN THE LEADERSHIP OF SERVAS BRAZIL

In the month of August Cesar Baron told the staff of volunteers of Servas Brazil that he was retiring from the functions of National Secretary:

“Servas is an organization for which I have much regard and consideration, but for some time I have not been able to dedicate myself to it as I should. I consider that I gave a good amount of work in the first years of my service, but I have to admit that, for personal reasons, at the moment I am not doing

enough for Servas and I believe that other volunteers can take on this task more adequately. So it is important to choose as soon as possible the person who will take charge of Servas from now on.”

Since the Deputy was inactive and no one else volunteered for the job at that time, this was an emergency situation. Roberto Borenstein agreed to take on the role of National Secretary, covering the leadership vacancy.

The new National Secretary's first concern was that activities of Servas Brazil needed to be well coordinated and that:

- There should be no interruption in carrying out interviews, accepting hosts, issuing Travelers' Letters and giving out lists to travelers.
- There will be no interruption in making and printing the new host list.
- Fluid communication should be maintained with Servas International.
- Servas Brazil should have some participation in drafting the agenda for the 2006 General Assembly, since it was one of the countries requesting the meeting.
- The 2004 annual report should be completed and sent to EXCO; it ought to have been sent at the beginning of this year.
- Projects initiated with Servas Youth should be maintained; the Bariloche 2006 event was enthusiastically promoted.
- The financial situation of Servas Brazil must be put in order.
- There should be better control of the stamps used.
- Internal communication needs to be kept fluid.
- A minimum amount of training could be given to people offering to volunteer for any function in Servas Brazil.

The present work structure in Servas Brazil is now made up of:

National Secretary: Roberto Borenstein

Deputy: Luci Braga

Peace Secretary: Maria Fernanda Vomero

Editor, Servas Brazil Newsletter: Regina Costa

International Host List Officer: Regina Costa

Host list coordinator, Brazil: Luci Braga

Treasurer: Flavio Tsai

Correspondence secretary: Flavio Araujo

ON THE REGIONAL LEVEL

State of Sao Paulo: Regional coordinator: Luci Braga; Interviewers: Maria Fernanda Vomero, Flavio Tsai and Juvensilson Kuninari

Events Coordinator: Juvenilson Kuninari
Coordinator of the Yahoo Discussion Group for
members of Servas/Sao Paolo: Luci Braga

Regional coordinators in other states:

Rio de Janeiro : Sonia

Santa Catarina : Ana Claudia

Pernambuco and Ceara: Gilkea Maciel

Maranhao: Martha Bezerra

Goiás and Federal District : Elter Nehemias

Minas Gerais: Thomas Tatkin

Rio Grande do Norte: Igor Ribeiro Dantas

**MARCH 18, 2006 – VOTING FOR
NATIONAL SECRETARY OF SERVAS
BRAZIL**

Servas Brazil is promoting an election process for the office of National Secretary. The National Secretary is in charge of coordination of activities and the administration of the national group, and represents the organization before Servas International.

The rules for this election were agreed on by the present volunteer staff of Servas Brazil.

1. Applications of candidates will be accepted until January 31, 2006.
2. Any current member of the Servas Brazil list can be a candidate.
3. In order to register as a candidate, you should send an e-mail to servasbrasil@yahoogrupos.com.br presenting a proposal for what you plan to achieve as National Secretary and indicating what you have done in Servas up to the present and the reason for presenting yourself as a candidate for this post.
4. The period of service is 3 years.
5. Hosts and day hosts who are included in the host list have the right to vote. Each residence will have the right to one vote.
6. The names of the official candidates and their proposals will be distributed to members at the beginning of February.
7. The period from February to the 17th of March will be available for candidates to make their campaigns, put forth their ideas, respond to questions presented by members, etc.
8. On the day of election, the voters should send their votes by e-mail, to 2 or 3 volunteers previously selected by the

candidates, who will be responsible for receiving and counting the votes.

Hosts from Servas Brazil: Get informed!
Ask questions! Discuss! Evaluate!
Participate! VOTE!

**SERVAS BRAZIL SUBMITS FIVE
PROPOSALS FOR INCLUSION IN THE
AGENDA OF THE 2006 GENERAL
ASSEMBLY**

Servas Brazil was the only Latin American group to send to EXCO proposals to be included in the agenda of the General Assembly. The complete list of proposals suggested by national groups is on : www.servas.org/siexco. EXCO is now working to include the suggestions within a viable work agenda.

**PROPOSAL 1: CREATION OF A GLOBAL
VOLUNTEER CENTER FOR SERVAS**

National Groups with specific needs would be able to find/contact potential Servas volunteers who live in other countries and offer them work. These extra hours of volunteer work could make a great difference for many National Groups.

We see that many National Groups lack volunteers to do the routine work, as well as to do specific development projects. Volunteers from the best structured Servas groups could provide a wide range of services. The number of possibilities is unlimited:

- hours of work on the Internet
- hours of work on the computer
- translations
- legal advice
- aid with gathering statistics
- aid with establishing work procedures, forms and guides
- improving communication with local hosts
- working as reporters for local news sources
- improving the contact of the National Group with other countries
- etc., etc., etc.

**PROPOSAL 2:
INVOLVEMENT/COMMITMENT OF THE
STRONGEST, BEST STRUCTURED
SERVAS GROUPS TO HELP ESTABLISH
AND PROMOTE SERVAS IN COUNTRIES
WHERE SERVAS IS NOT YET
ESTABLISHED (OR HAS FALLEN APART).**

Countries that traditionally have a high number of travelers (USA, Germany, Canada, Great Britain, France, Italy, Australia, Israel, and others) should/could increase their commitment by finding potential hosts in new countries (or countries where Servas has fallen apart). It is in their interest for travelers to be able to find Servas hosts in all the countries that they visit. If Servas travelers don't find hosts in the countries they visit, they will probably join the Hospitality Club or other clubs.

**PROPOSAL 3:
ALL NATIONAL GROUPS SHOULD FOCUS ON PROVIDING THE BEST SERVICE POSSIBLE TO MEMBERS AND INTERESTED PERSONS. THE SERVICE GIVEN TO FOREIGNERS SHOULD NOT BE DIFFERENT FROM THE SERVICE GIVEN TO LOCAL MEMBERS.**

Approved Servas travelers should be able (and should have the right) to obtain host lists and information about any country, in any country. They should never be told, "Please contact the country that issued your Letter of Introduction." Servas International should develop a global document of Rights and Duties of Hosts and Travelers.

**PROPOSAL 4:
ALL NATIONAL GROUPS SHOULD BE ENCOURAGED TO ESTABLISH A DEVELOPMENT PLAN, WITH CLEAR AND REALISTIC GOALS, AND THIS INFORMATION SHOULD BE TRANSPARENT AND AVAILABLE TO THE KEY PERSONS OF SERVAS THROUGHOUT THE WORLD.**

The Servas organization has no tradition of establishing development programs and setting short, mid-term or long-term goals in a coordinated way. All the national groups should be encouraged to establish clear and realistic goals, proportionate to their means and work conditions.

PROPOSAL 5: RELATIONS BETWEEN NATIONAL GROUPS

The functioning of Servas is based on the idea that 2 days of contact between individuals (host and travelers) of different cultures and origins will allow them to exchange experiences and learn from each other.

If the Servas vision is for hosts and travelers to be open and genuinely interested in knowing

one another, wouldn't it be natural for the national groups to also share this idea and use it to form bonds with other national groups? We think that the national groups should be encouraged to form bonds with Servas groups from neighboring countries, to know how they function, to understand their strengths and weaknesses, to share experiences, and, hopefully, to work together on common projects. When national groups learn that they can form stronger bonds of friendship with neighboring Servas groups, their members also will be positively affected.

BRAZIL AND PORTUGAL, FRIENDSHIP AND SISTERHOOD

I grew up hearing my maternal grandfather talk about the old country (he had never been to Portugal or any other place outside of Santa Catarina, but he had a lot of geographic knowledge) and, decades later, when I was in Lisbon for the first time and walked through the narrow streets of the islands of Santa Maria and San Miguel in the Azores, I could understand how special it is to hear the Portuguese language in a foreign country. To know that you are outside of your country in other territory but that there is a familiar language, with differences in words, expressions, intonation. It is Portuguese spoken another way, but it is Portuguese, imagine that!

I already knew that Portugal was a sister country, but to feel that sisterhood was one of the greatest discoveries of this year. During a week in the month of June, I had the pleasure of hosting three Portuguese Servas travelers, whose first experience with the organization was in Brazil: Angelina Carvalho, Manuela Gama and Maria Ferrandis. It was also my first contact with Servas members from Portugal. On the days when I could be with them, the evenings when I got home from work, the weekend, we had the opportunity to converse, exchange ideas, remember special moments of our lives, take walks...All of this created a bond of friendship with this special trio. And it relaxed me during a difficult and tiring week at work.

I had already attempted to make a few contacts with Servas Portugal during the times when I had traveled in that country. Some members that I tried to contact were not in Lisbon during the hottest months (with good reason!), since they had gone to the beach. In the archipelago of the Azores I did not find any members when I tried to make contact. The visit of Angelina, Manuela and Maria opened the possibilities, in

my opinion, for a better exchange between Brazil and Portugal. I hope that the affection and the nostalgia left by the three Portuguese girls will be a seed so that more and more trips will be taken by members from both countries. We have much to learn from each other and to exchange. Certainly as soon as I can I am going to return a special visit!

Here are some beautiful lines left by dear Manuela in a “surprise” card strategically hidden in my apartment, “In Lamego, when you come there will be plenty of wine to celebrate and we will strengthen the ties which we started to form here, in your house, in your land.” Just before my birthday, I was given one of the most special presents of my life: three Portuguese sisters!

Ana Claudia Menezes
Regional Coordinator, Santa Catarina, Brazil
Anamenezes2002@hotmail.com
Original in Portuguese

TO THINK ABOUT

Men walk in a line
On the planet Earth
Each carries a bag in front
And one behind.
In the front bag are our good points
In the rear bag our faults.
So during life’s journey
We keep our attention
On the virtues we have,
Grasped to our chest.
But our eyes don’t leave
The shoulders of the one ahead,
Seeing all his defects.
We judge ourselves better than he
Not knowing that the one behind us
Thinks the same of us.

Author: Gilberto de Nucci

CANADIAN TRAVELER INTERVIEWED BY JOURNALIST FROM CURITIBA

After 5 weeks traveling around Rio, Ouro Preto, Brasilia, Salvador, Vitoria and Parati, Jeannette Vandarbug, Servas traveler from Toronto, went to visit Foz de Iguazu. Passing through Curitiba, traveling by train, Jeannette got to know a woman journalist and press attaché for the city, who was doing a report on Curitiba’s impression on foreigners. The journalist took Jeannette to visit different tourist sites in the city, they spent two days together, and finally Jeannette gave her an interview. During the

conversations Jeannette also talked about Servas.

As a consequence, Servas Brazil has just been contacted by the press representative of Curitiba, who wants to interview the local Servas leaders. We don’t know if anything will be published about Servas in Curitiba press. But, apparently, Servas has just gained a new host in Curitiba. Thanks to the traveler from Toronto.

NEWS FROM CHILE

TRAGEDY CAUSED BY HURRICANE KATRINA – SERVAS CHILE ADDS ITS GRAIN OF SAND

Inspired by a message sent by Gary Cooper, the International Servas Peace Secretary, Servas Chile showed solidarity with the victims of the tragic hurricane in a very nice way. The National Secretary, Gaston Luz, sent a message directly to Servas members in the New Orleans region.

At that moment of desperation and chaos, Gaston kept in touch with a resident of New Orleans who was supplying aid to people in need.

Servas Chile did a fund raising campaign among its members; the money will be transferred to Servas volunteers in New Orleans. It was a grain of sand. It was a grain of humanity. It was a grain of love.

NEWS FROM COLOMBIA

MANNERS AND COMMUNICATION IN COLOMBIA

The host list of Servas Colombia contains some interesting commentaries about life in Colombia. One of them is about manners and communication in Colombia.

“Colombians (like most South Americans) are less direct than North Americans and Europeans. When conversing with Colombians you need to know how to interpret what they say, since they try to avoid offending anyone.

However, among intimate friends and family members the opposite happens, and they may be overly direct when they feel close to you. Colombians use fewer polite phrases and tend to maintain a certain distance as compared to most of their Latin neighbors, which gives a false

impression that they are cold, arrogant or not very friendly.”

CULTURAL ETHICS

A culture of peace implies education directed toward social change and teaching which develops the understanding and experience of alternatives. The Civic Cultural Ethic has to be formed and lived through tension between the ends and the means; it constitutes the nucleus from which comes the cultural ethic of peace. The peace ethic can be a way of judging and improving civilization. The division between Rational thought and irrational beliefs, and their consequences, is one of the obstacles to overcome in a plan for a culture of peace.

The separation between the public and private worlds, between the political and abstract and the daily and interpersonal, between the brain and the heart, between the sacred and the profane, leads to dehumanization of politics and to the feelings many people have toward politics.

In the search for a culture of peace in a geographic framework such as ours, we must not forget that practices persist which allow the destruction of other cultures. A culture of peace, therefore, has to recognize and respect the intrinsic value of all the different cultural activities.

Ethics are a way of life, they are a way of being, which create man's surroundings in which his character, his being and his personality are formed.

If we can not agree on minimal ethics which guarantee that people can live together and all can participate and develop, all the time, the future of humanity is in danger; we must form ethics for life itself.

To construct a public ethic is to agree on basic common values with full respect for the life and integrity of the person. Around this are the other human rights such as peace or democracy, because it is not possible to speak of rights, peace, democracy and ethics without speaking of social, economic and political justice.

Oscar H. Leal

A TRIP THROUGH THE RICH REGION OF THE ORINOCO RIVER, IN THE EAST OF COLOMBIA

When the Editor invited us to write an article for the Newsletter, I could not miss the opportunity to talk about this beautiful region.

Like everything in Colombia, we are full of contradictions. We are known for being a violent culture, but this stigma loses weight when we travel and get to know the fine people in the countryside, where kindness and friendliness still come first, in spite of episodes which darken our reputation.

We can speak of our varied landscapes, formed by a geographical accident and climatic conditions which favor us with a very rich biodiversity.

Colombia, which has less than 1% of the earth's surface, has around 10% of the living species of the planet. And this is evident when you visit our parks and other beautiful protected areas.

With respect to other natural resources, Colombia has also been privileged by nature. That's the case with water. Colombia was carved by enormous and abundant rivers, including those of our eastern lands, and has extensive grass-covered plains, dedicated principally to livestock, although the soil is very poor.

It is through those plains that the Orinoco River flows. It amazed the scholar Humboldt by the force of its waters and the richness of the surrounding nature. In Colombia the basin of the Orinoco River is fed by innumerable rivers, each of which has its own charm.

In 2002 I had the opportunity to travel to Inirida, capital of Guania, in the east of Colombia. From there we went in two launches and one canoe on various rivers, including the Orinoco. We were carrying cargo which looked like the trip in the movie Fitzcarraldo because of the abundance of foods and supplies that we took with us.

Our group of 5 tourists were aided by a team of two helpers and two pilots. We carried plastic tables and chairs, a canopy to eat under, large cylinders of propane gas, a stove, tents, hammocks, fishing rods, cushions, portable refrigerators and a "delicatessen" with excellent canned goods, some of which were imported, wines, other liquors, and glasses. Ice was not a problem because we traveled to the Venezuelan bank of the river to load up for the "happy hour", when from plastic chairs in the river we

watched the colors of the evening lit by the “deer sun”. (1)

We camped on beaches which are formed in the rivers of this region between January and April of every year, the time of low water level. We visited the hills of Mavicure, near the Inirida River, enormous treasures of the Guania, from which you could see the vast eastern plains all the way to Venezuela. Also we went on part of the Atabapo River, with its beautiful and warm waters, which give the sensation of going swimming in warm tea because of the richness of its tannins; and we stretched out on the white quartz sands, which are so pure that they look like the sand in hourglasses.

A trip through the swamps or “**madres viejas**” that the rivers leave when they separate from the main river bed; fishing for **caribes** or **piranhas** ; also “**tembladores**”, the fish that because of their electric charge are dangerous to unaware waders who dare to cross the puddles or stagnant pools during the time of low water. Rivers of crystal clear waters rich in **payaras**, fish which have enormous, sharp teeth but are a pleasure for the palate, especially if they have been smoked over a native fire.

And finally, the torrents of the Orinoco, near the El Tuparro Park, where we had a scare when the motor of the launch died and we were close to being dragged toward the torrents.

All these memories remind us how beautiful it is to travel through Colombia, and unfortunately there are still some beautiful area which are restricted, even to Colombians, by violent groups that won't let us enjoy in peace the paradise-like landscapes like those of the Orinoco.

Marcela Bonilla Madrinan
Member of Servas Colombia

(1) The “deer sun” is an expression which makes allusion to the setting sun when the deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*) come out.

NEWS FROM ECUADOR

After not existing for several years, Servas Ecuador has come back to life:

A new host list is available for Servas Ecuador, with 27 host addresses: 22 in Quito, 2 in Cuenca, 2 in Guayaquil and 1 in Esmeraldas. These 27 hosts have the following origins:

-follow up of travel reports: 2 hosts

-recommendation by Gaston Lux, National Secretary of Chile, 1 host

-personal contacts by Pedro Puente. During his trip he developed a network of hosts: 24 hosts, based on friendships in Ecuador and then friends of friends.

Pedro Puente (member of Servas Peru and Editor of the South American Newsletter) and Roberto Borenstein (member of Servas Brazil and Area Coordinator for South America) are the principal contacts until local leadership is established. Travelers should be aware that all the hosts are new members of Servas and so your visit could be very educational for them.

Pedro created a Yahoo discussion group for members of Servas Ecuador, which functions both as an information channel and as an educational tool.

LIFE'S OPPORTUNITY

*Each morning is a hope,
Each day a great opportunity,
Each instant is to be enjoyed,
Each time is to be lived happily.*

*You are the opportunity and hope
To achieve what you so desire
You are the time and spirit of life
It takes to realize your humanity.*

*Give life the best of yourself
And life will return the best to you
Put all of your love into time
And time will be your eternity.*

Time is the space of eternity that we have while we are alive, it is the opportunity and the chance to do things.

Our time, therefore, is today, because we are alive and we must make things happen, this depends on each one of us and no one else. So, get to work and don't leave until tomorrow what you can do today...tomorrow it may be late, too late.

You live today... do it today...it's no use to leave flowers in the cemetery...you are alive now and so are people you love, tell them you love them, show them that you do, give your time to serve them, support them, listen to them...

So plant seeds today...

Carlos Carrillo Salvador

NEWS FROM PARAGUAY

SERVAS PARAGUAY ISSUES A NEW HOST LIST

The new list for Servas Paraguay will be available in January 2006. Travelers who visit Paraguay in 2006 will have the advantage of an updated list. The former National Secretary, Francisco Camacho, and the Area Coordinator are working together on this task.

The challenge for Servas Paraguay in 2006 will be how to really function as a participating part of the international community of Servas. For this to happen the members need to find a way to organize themselves better as a national group. Servas Paraguay will evolve as long as volunteers in leadership roles find the time to carry out the responsibilities of their jobs.

A BEAUTIFUL EXPERIENCE TRAVEL THROUGH EUROPE

Hosts Magdalena and Rafael Ortiz, from Ciudad del Este, traveled for the first time with Servas. They had some stress when near the date of their departure they had still not received all the host lists of the countries to be visited. After urgent messages, contacts with the Area Coordinator and with the leaders of the European countries, asking for help, they finally left with only a few lists in hand. This made it difficult to plan the trip, but it didn't change their desire to know Servas hosts.

“We had a positive experience with Servas. It was our first time as travelers. In spite of some difficulties in getting the host lists in Paraguay, we were hosted in various cities by Servas members.

In Leverkusen, Germany, the Baerenz family more than once made us feel at home.

In Budapest, Hungary, we stayed with Akos Pyros. A very interesting person, who speaks several languages, and that helped us a lot.

In Innsbruck, Austria, we stayed with Maria and Erich Faulhammer, new members and very welcoming.

In Venice, Italy, we stayed with Franca Franzin. In Rome with Mauricio Pomella, also excellent. And finally, in Zurich, Switzerland, with Cristina Acevedo.”

NEWS FROM PERU

PROPOSED RULES FOR SERVAS PERU

Since its inception Servas Peru has been governed by rules and regulations in accordance with the laws of Servas International, and those were modified over time according to decisions of different directors and the agreements of the Assembly, but in the years 2000 and 2001 a Rules Committee was established, the approval of which has been pending since that time.

In August 2005 the present Director made the decision to form the Rules Committee, as follows: Carmen de Villa Garcia, former National Secretary, Consuelo Tuezta, Yudi Villa and Omar Calderon. Based on the proposals already drafted, they presented a preliminary plan, and with additions which to date have been presented, the next step is to fully consider the Proposed Rules of Servas Peru, so that once they are approved in the Assembly they will regulate the functioning of our institution.

The work was based on the following documents: plans from former Rules Committees, Agreement of the Regional Meeting of Cochabamba (the latest that we have) and the contributions of the present Rules Committee.

In order that all Servas members can send in their thoughts and suggestions, the Proposed Rules were distributed through the National Communication Network as a first step; when the Extraordinary Assembly is held each chapter of the Proposed Rules would be submitted to vote.

The Board of Directors thanks all the Servas members who made contributions.

Virginia Munte Flores
Assistant National Secretary

WE AGREE THAT RULES ARE NEEDED

By means of the National Network of Servas Peru, there was good discussion and participation about the proposal of the present leadership to reinstate the category of member: “Traveler Only.” Thanks to this medium of communication and discussion, we were able to have the participation of members from the cities of Arequipa, Cuzco, Lima, Piura, Puno, Tacna, presenting opinions which were considered by the Rules Committee in its Preliminary Plan.

For now, it will continue to be necessary to be a host first in order to be a traveler. To know first the meaning of “In Servas, WE SERVE.”

Our interest is to have a more homogenous group, with each member eager to be a good will ambassador and to be able to serve our visiting friends better.

Abigail Carrasco-Puno

REFLECTIONS OF A YOUNG SERVAS MEMBER

Which developed country has had in its history an epoch of colonization where the native people were not exterminated or savagely exploited?

In which developed country have cultures with different interests lived together for centuries? It seems that there is no developed country that has achieved development that was not based on one group's interests and traditions or the use of force.

One can observe that the most religious peoples are really those whose countryside, climate, and nature in general have an impact on them. This determines the religious attitude of the populations. On the other hand, in countries where the countryside has less of an impact, the attitude of the people is more practical, and this determines their economic development.

The worst type of discrimination comes from the mental atrophy of the one who discriminates, the inability to be able to understand that all physical, social or cultural aspects have their roots in a series of factors that range from the climatic to the historical. However, that person who discriminates is not conscious that he would be exactly the same as the person he looks down on if factors that determined his state of being (exterior and interior) had been the same that influenced the one discriminated against.

Diego Puente

NEWS FROM URUGUAY

SERVAS URUGUAY HAS A NEW LEADERSHIP GROUP

After the elections held by its members on November 16, Karina Guerrero announced that Servas Uruguay has a new groups of leaders:
National Secretary: Marcelo Sivack
Assistant Secretary (Deputy): Karina Guerrero
Peace Secretary: Norma Daleiro
Servas Uruguay is strengthened by this work group, since Karina Guerrero formerly was acting alone as National Secretary, without the presence of an established work group.

Welcome to the members of the new leadership group, and we hope that they will receive the support of all the Uruguayan members.

NEWS FROM VENEZUELA

Hosts from Puerto Ayacucho, in the Amazon jungle, are the most visited by travelers.

Victor Gutierrez Guape (a veterinarian) and Adilia de Gutierrez (English teacher) are the Venezuelan hosts who receive the most travelers from other countries. They host an average of 12 per year, the highest number of all the 35 hosts in Servas Venezuela.

Puerto Ayacucho is the capital of the Venezuelan state Amazonas and it is situated on the right bank of the Orinoco River, in the north east of the state. The estimated populations is 40,000 inhabitants. It is a picturesque river port situated across from the Colombian town of Casuarito, which causes an interesting passenger and commercial movement between the two towns. In the ethnological museum of Puerto Ayacucho one can get to know a great deal about the native peoples who live in the Amazon. The distance to the city of Caracas is about 830 kilometers.

NATIONAL SECRETARY WANTS MORE EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION

In correspondence with the Area Coordinator, National Secretary Fanny Bello has been expressing a desire to have world-wide statistics about the flow of Servas travelers in all countries.

Fanny comments, "It seems a good idea to me to have reports go to the Area Coordinator, from every country, listing the travelers who have been received, in order to have statistics, along with notes on the experiences that those travelers have had. If all countries did this we would have this information on a world-wide level. I believe the national secretaries should collect this information. It's a question of standardizing a short questionnaire to be filled out by hosts. With this information we could do a lot.

On the other hand, we must insist that travelers turn in their travel reports to the national secretaries. And the national secretaries should pass them on to the area coordinators. This information should be exchanged; it will help us very much to function better.

STATISTICS FROM THE SOUTH AMERICAN COMMUNITY OF NATIONS

Population: 361 million inhabitants
Area: 17,658,000 square kilometers, 45% of the continent (12% of the total land)
Coasts: 25,432 km (as a continental mass), 34,500 km (total)
Extension: 45% of the American continent
Gross Internal Product: USA 973 billion dollars
External debt: US 315 billion dollars

TRAVELERS' REPORTS

SABINE POOL, AUSTRIA

Sitting currently in the living room of another very nice and friendly SERVAS host in Haifa, the 3rd biggest city in Israel and writing these lines on his laptop...how easy travel life can be, and how rich to know now so many more nice people in the world after having discovered SERVAS.

Just before I started my round-the-world trip in December 2004, a friend told me about SERVAS...I did not hesitate to join the club and never ever regretting it one single day!

Specially as a woman (36 yrs) traveling alone and without any big backpack experiences so far, I felt much more relaxed knowing that there are "homes far from home" out there, in case you want to feel the warmth of a living room and close company, other than in cheap hostels and anonymous hotels...

After India, Thailand, Vietnam, Cambodia, Singapore and Australia I finally arrived safely in Mexico, followed by Brazil in September. Also in these two countries I was very lucky again with my chosen hosts. Two in Mexico City, one in Cancun, one in Sao Paolo, one in Brasilia and one in Curitiba for Brazil.

To make it short what being hosted by SERVAS members means for me, I opted for a brainstorming version, memories coming straight out of my heart and mind:

- a warm and hearty welcome at airports, bus stations, train stations, even petrol stations in the middle of nowhere
- a clean and cozy bed, in small or big rooms, doesn't really matter

- swimming pool and villa or stuffed little dusty apartment, all is surprise... and all is home...which is the main point!
- empty fridges or sumptuous dinners, shopping together or alone
- oh God, how to identify the right stuff, how to read the unknown language?
- long talks about God and life on the couch, with a hot cup of tea in the evening or a cool drink on the terrace
- use of laptops, cars (never dared to accept this offer!), hairdryers and other big and little things we travelers are used to but do not carry along
- being introduced to even more other interesting locals or "exotic" friends (like artists, composers, bohemians...)
- cultural events at locations which any standard innocent traveler would have never discovered and tourist information staff don't tell you about
- praise the e-mail century! So easy to find hosts and even nicer to stay in touch with them anytime from anywhere without a big effort, specially after being back home later
- a super organized SERVAS coordinator (for sure in Mexico and Brazil is getting very strong too!) transmits the seriousness of this big international organization, a thing which many members of both sides still might not see.

I honestly admire all those sacrificing their free time to edit newsletters, type and send host lists and reports, organize meetings and events, never tired to connect people and improve the peace building between nations and individuals (how very true specially here in Israel/Palestine).

Where politics often fail, SERVAS works; tested and approved by myself!

Peace and understanding, tolerance and trust above all – Vive SERVAS!

Sabine Pool sab1mail@yahoo.de
(Austrian, living and working in Belgium,
traveler through Servas Belgium)

TONI AND MANUEL, SPAIN

Introduction: A couple from Sevilla, Spain, sent their report of travel in Brazil in the form of "literatura de cordel" which is a form of popular writing, in verse, using words in Portuguese within the Spanish, as is common in the north east of Brazil.

**LA AVENTURA BRASILEIRA
DE TOÑI Y MANUEL
(PLIEGOS DE CORDEL)**

Esta es la historia, señoras
y señores, amigos nossos,
de un apaixonamento
de Toñi y Manolo en Brasil
con su mesa y con su pueblo:
Una aventura completa
original, sorprendente
que nos ha hecho engordar,
crescer espiritualmente
y que agora, com você,
la queremos compartir.

**De Espanha a
Rio Grande do Norte**

Empezamos en Natal
-sol pastoso y água quente-
cual turistas en periplo,
con masajes y excursiones
en un hotel junto al mar
y mucho cambio de ambiente,
desayunos desmedidos
y no pocas emociones.

El Nordeste es camarãos,
praias, dunas, muito bongo;
en Pipa vimos golfinhos
y ganamos por bailongos.
El buggy con su bugueiro
sube dunas, baja cuestras,
derrapa en playas y sendas:
es el “jaguar”brasileiro.

Todo el Norte de Brasil
es un inmenso mercado:
si te quieres ir librando,
todo el día, “obrigado”.

Los ojos que sólo han visto
todo el campo urbanizado
se alegran de que en América
natureza haya triunfado.

De R. N. a Paraíba

De Riogrande do Norte
a Paraíba, y en Tambaba
disfrutamos noche y día
de una inmensa y sola playa.

De Paraíba a Pernambuco,

Ô linda situação
con bella historia e igrejas
que incendiaron holandeses
por odio a los portugueses.
Un muchacho de la calle
fue nuestro guía adecuado:
luchaba por integrarse,
por todos muy valorado.

**De Olinda a Salvador,
y ya estamos en Bahía:**

Bahía son los orishas
superpuestos y entroncados
a las vírgenes y santos...;
y el arte de Jorge Amado.
José fue el primer “Servas”
que nos abrió el coração:
un chico muito sensible,
que nos trató como irmão.
Quiere convertir un forte
en un centro cultural:
tendrá que sudar canela,
oxalá que tenha sorte.

La cena más bahiana,
noche negra en bairro preto,
la presidió Feliciano
por feliz y por creyente-
y la ofició Jose Dantas,
con Oliven Oliveira
-de aceite, toneladas-
el bello efebo Daniele,
Toñi y Manolo, en la infancia:
acarajé y abará
las viandas consagradas.

Antonio es de familia
de las de toda la vida:
doña Fátima y Patricia
lo tienen como en palmitas;
y él, como chico listo,
se deja muy bien querer,
imitando a don Antonio
que sabe muy bem viver.

Y como está estudiando
el doctorado en Sevilla
aprende rápido y sabe
que será un muy buen guía.

En os Prazeres da Carne
boi, frango y cordeiro
en veinte estilos distintos
y una buena caipirinha
nos hicieron frotar...grávidos.

Y no contentos con eso
nos fuimos a por rodizio
de pizzas, un par de veces,
con José, Antonio, Paty,
Isabel, Ramón y Carol:
¡Ole la gula y el vicio!
Silvestre es un artista,
“Ô Espanha”é uma enorme
pessoa transida de genio,
mais sem padrinho adequado.
Junto al Cristo del Bom Fim
pedimos muchos deseos:
allí los milagros valen
también para los ateos.
En Praia do Forte oímos,
el canto del bemteví
y el Morro de São Paulo
está para repetir.

Toñi, en el Norte, turista
en Salvador, bahiana
en Rio fue carioca
y en Iguazú... borboleta.
Água de coco é gostosa
todo lo sana y lo cura;
cana de açúcar é um dom
para Brasil, de Natura,
que provee de coco e cana
a todos os brasileiros
sem nenhum intervenção
da atual globalização.
A propósito de yankis
aquí está o Homem Carranca
para alejar a los “Buxes”
y a todo el que haga falta.

Andan en fiera batalla
el Congreso y el Senado
contra tanta corrupção:
¡democracia y luz, caralho!
Y a Lula le deseamos
que sea valiente y templado
que el planeta necesita
de gobernantes honrados.

**De Bahía a RJ:
Río de Janeiro famosa:**

Rio de Enero, los ônibus,
vuelan “a calzón quitao”;
el carioca está loco,
del vivir abigarrado
de músicas de mil ritmos
de mil sabores en prato

y allí la ciudad de Olinda:

Europeos y mulatos...
y de hacer de la mistura
su arte y filosofía,
y un vivir en plenitud
louco cordo em alegría.

Doña Madel Teresinha
-socióloga benemérita-
en su acogedora casa
-a estos chicos de la bética-
y con un pie en el estribo,
nos pudo atender, dialéctica,
y enseñarnos que la vida
más allá de la polémica,
es la unión de todo en uno,
sin despreciar la poética
la ciencia, el buda, el amor,
y estudiar la salud médica
integrando los saberes
sin olvidarnos la ética.
Rio fue para la noche:

Teatro, y María Creuza
cantando la bossa nova
en la zona Ipanema;

samba de raíz en el Puerto,
y en Lapa una "samba nova"
en la Carioca de Gema.

Marcia es una chica boa
muy bien plantada en el mundo:
actúa, dirige, escribe,
buena amiga vagamundas.

En Juiz de Fora, ¡sorpresa!
una familia total:
Dalva, de todo se ríe;
José, a todos atiende;
Anderson, todo disfrute;
Michelle, a todo se atreve.

En Rio Grande do Sul, Iguacu

Iguaçu nos conmovió
por la fuerza de las aguas,
el estruendo, el arco iris,
y las mariposas raudas.

La media hora de kayak
se nos hizo hora y media:

de unir indígenas, pretos,
menos mal que los caimanes
tomaban el sol en tierra.

La cantidad de alimentos
-lagosta, feijão, peixada-
de este diverso Brasil
- dorado, carne de sol-
sólo tiene parangón
-açai, papaya, manga-
con los sucos y sorvetes
-melão, morango, laranja-
una buena caipirinha
y el potente guaraná.

Se nos quedan en la mente
mil imágenes amables:
el urubú, el coatí,
fragatas y tartarugas...
pero son las más afables
las vuestras, nossos amigos,
y os mandamos mil besos
com ordem e com progresso.

-¡iiísso!

Manolo y Toñi
acoragu@upo.es

31 de Agosto de 2005

*In English we can't replicate the colorful
language but can only summarize some of the
delights of their rich adventure, which they say
made them gain weight and grow spiritually.*

*-from north to south, desert to jungles to Iguazu
Falls*

*-travel by dune buggy, bus, boat, kayak (near
crocodiles)*

-learning the history of colonial conflicts

-making friends with Servas hosts

-enjoying music of a thousand rhythms

-delighting in local seafood, fruits, drinks

-meeting people of all races, cultures

-seeing animals found only in Brazil

*But the best were the friends made; of all the
memories, those count the most.*

PETER AND NICOLE, GERMANY

In March we started our spectacular trip in Quito, Ecuador, to get to know this South American world with its people, its cultures and regions. Since then we have been traveling in 8 South American countries – Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia, Paraguay, Brazil (only the south of the country, unfortunately) Uruguay, Argentina y Chile. We suppose that we don't need to say that everything delighted us very much, especially

meeting all the nice people with their different histories, the interesting costumes and certainly the impressive landscapes!

For the moment we are in Patagonia, Chile (Puerto Natales) and we have seen the petrified forests, whales, penguins, dolphins, glaciers, Tierra del Fuego and logically the "end of the world" in this same region. Sadly, we only have less than 4 weeks left before we have to return to Santiago, to get a flight home on December 22, 2005 – two days before Christmas! After 9 months of traveling we are a little tired, but that's not going to affect our last weeks in Patagonia and Chile.

Everything that we visited here in South America is marvelous and that is the reason that we use all our internet time to send our thousands of photos and diaries.

<http://www.omotion.de/de/southamerica/gallery/>

A hug from travelers **Peter and Nicole!**

FRANCESCA CREPET, FRANCE

My comment about Ecuador: I wrote to 5 in Quito, 1 in Esmeraldas and 1 in Cuenca. The only reply I received was from Carlos Carrillo, who came one morning to meet me.

He proposed coming to pick me up at the Hotel on Sunday morning to go to visit a place, and I am still waiting for him!!!!

For me this is not important because **SERVAS WAS THE SUPER GIFT OF MY LIFE**. When when I am welcomed and helped, it is a great ray of sun in my trip.

And there have been many friendly encounters. Also I met the National Secretary of Colombia, who came to meet with me for a conversation of two hours in a café, I was with a Peruvian friend and that made our exchange easier.

And, as you know, for the moment I am in Lima at the home of Fernando Ugarte, well taken care of by the lovely family. A classic victim of stomach problems, I am recuperating and hope to be in form to be able to continue my trip which I hope will take me to Brazil. Cordially,

The Nomad francoisecrepet@yahoo.es

MUSTAK CAGLAR – TURKEY

I returned from Santiago to Istanbul last week. I really enjoyed being there, especially Peru and Bolivia. The Andes and the Amazon are very interesting.

I contacted more than 12 Servas members in Lima and fortunately Malena Valverde answered and was very nice. I stayed in a hotel but we met almost every evening during my time there.

Afterwards I met 2 Servas members in Cuzco: Valentin Cusihuaman and Pablo Miranda. I also met a member in Puno: Irma.

I was not able to find a single Bolivian member in La Paz.

I contacted 4 or 5 members in Santiago and Claudia Nercaseau gave me a positive response. Unfortunately her mother was sick and I was not able to stay at her house but, in spite of her having to care for her mother we met a couple of times in Santiago.

I would like 2 things now: to be able to speak Spanish and to spend more time in South America.

mustakcaglar@hotmail.com.

DANIELE BINAGHI, ITALY

Traveling with Servas in Latin American (at least the western part) is not always easy, but it almost always offers the opportunity to get to know some very nice people.

Starting my trip in January in Santiago, Chile, I met the National Secretary, Andres Ramirez,

who gave me the list of contacts for that country. Because of the lack of hosts in the south where I spent much time and because of having many Esperanto friends to visit, of all the hosts I only met Gaston and Karina from Valparaiso, a Chilean-Ecuadorian couple who gave me plenty of affection and information about the whole continent.

In Bolivia, the only ones I found were the National Secretary and the Assistant Secretary, in Cochabamba: because of lack of understanding between my contacts and me, I thought they were the only Servas hosts in the country. Well, at least we talked a lot about the economic, political and social situation of Bolivia, which helped me understand better what happened in May in La Paz.

Peru turned out better: Fernando, super active and punctual National Secretary, followed my travel like a guardian angel giving me all the information that I needed; and if sometimes the directions that he gave me were wrong, the correct ones arrived in a few hours.

Due to my short stay, I only briefly met Irma in Puno and Ruth in Ayacucho, cities that don't have very much to see but are good bases for seeing nearby sites, like Lake Titicaca or the artisan workshops. Also brief but interesting was the meeting with the architect Jorge Manrique, from Urubamba, the only contact in the Sacred Valley who answered me (along with Roxsana Almanza), and received me very kindly.

Longer stays in Pisco, with Monica Fatima, and in Trujillo, with Elva Pineda and her large family, permitted me to get to know those cultures and everyday life, through conversations and walking in the markets.

I got to know a lot of markets in Arequipa, where Ludwig Mercado and his family live. Besides "putting up with me" for a week they introduced me to the delights of Chinese-Peruvian cooking (el "chifa") and filled me with information about different interesting places in the country. Finally, Iquitos, with Jenny Tuesta and her house with swimming pool (!) and motorcycles and other Servas friends (Paco the Mexican Servas traveler, Graciela, Helena and Raul from the same city) were the perfect complement of two and a half months in the land of the Incas.

In Huaraz, between the White and the Black Mountain Ranges, I had no luck in contacting friends there, and unfortunately I could not meet Segundo Gonzalez in Lambayeque because his reply arrived too late.

In Ecuador, Servas is developing now, and I had the opportunity to know the hosts Milton and Emy and Fredy Ramireo; they hosted me during my two stays in Quito, showing me different places and parts of that capital.

Last but not least in my heart, Antonio and Alegria Mejia, parents of Karina from Valparaiso: although they were not in Servas (now they are), thanks to the courtesy of their daughter they had me at their house 3 times, treating me like a son.

To them, and to all my new friends, a thousand thanks and best wishes. www.pecorElettriche.it

PACO GARCIA, MEXICO

PERU MORE THAN MET MY EXPECTATIONS

The first stage of this trip was on the road. Peru fully met the expectations, a bit mixed, that I had of the country:

Nice people: I won't forget that when I didn't have the means to return from the pyramids of the moon and sun to the city of Trujillo, a pair of national guards gave me a ride right to the door of the hostel where I was staying. They knew all the Mexican movie actors: Negrete, Infante, the Solers, Lola Beltran, Panzon Panseco, Choforo Chaf and Kelly and even Pocholo. That killed me. Greetings to Winsor and to Chavo from the eight in Trujillo. The person in charge at the hostel saw me arrive with the police and almost dropped the plates she was carrying.

In financial matters Peru fully met my expectations. You can eat for 3 soles (10 pesos) well served and clean. The bus ticket for distances of around 20 hours varies between 25 and 40 soles (80 and 120 pesos). You can find a decent room, with your bed and other furniture in good condition for about 10 soles (30 pesos). The ironic part is that the difficult economic situation doesn't allow Peruvians to travel within their own beautiful country.

What I couldn't overcome was fatigue. The first 4,000 kilometers took weight off this skinny body. Bus and launch were the means of transport, as well as hitchhiking.

Now I didn't travel all alone. I had the great luck to escape from (choros), piranhas, robbers, mice and plants known around the world. Up to now I can count myself among the fortunate few. I hope to have the same luck from now on. Really I don't know why I should worry if I go like a bum that nobody notices. In spite of the Ipod and the camera, the boots...the cards...the

eyeglasses, my notebook, the postcard from Che, Pablo's rubber dinosaur, (chale)...

As a tourist, I found a paradise. There were many places I couldn't visit. Maybe Peru can be covered well in 3 months, calmly, without mishaps; (I'm telling stories). In chronological order, these were my favorites: Huaraz with its beautiful snow covered mountains, Amazonas, Maranon de Colado, Iquitos, Ayacucho, Macchu Picchu, and Tacna.

The Servas people are a real oasis for physical and emotional rest. It's like coming home. I realize that the essence of Serve is to inspire friendship and affection. To be a part of this organization not only give us good experiences but also certain duties. It seems to me that the most important thing is to have an open heart, as was true with all the Servas hosts who fortunately received me.

I feel nostalgia, for instance, on hearing the music of Aleks in unexpected places – the bus driver puts it on at top volume from the sierra of Quillabamba to Santa Maria, up in the Andes – and it reminds me of my kindergarten, and of my little brothers and sisters. Tell Alejandro, although it shouldn't inflate his ego...more. Don't tell him that here they think that it's Bose who sings with la Torrojo (juar).

Now I'm in the middle of the beautiful republic of Chile, taking a trip toward the Valley of Elqui, where there are sightings of UFOs very often.

Pacopablo6799@yahoo.com.mx

PETER BOERS, THE NETHERLANDS

As an ecologist I try to live as sound as possible so I searched for many years to find a boat instead of a plane to South America. A few years ago I found the boat, a cargo ship from Grimaldi lines, an Italian firm. I traveled from Antwerp in Belgium along the coast of France, Spain and Africa to South America to arrive 30 days later in Buenos Aires, where the air is not so clean as the name suggests.

Before my travel I wrote to many hosts in this capital and one wrote back, so I stayed with her in her humble flat. She really spent time with me, because it was weekend when I arrived. We went to Tigre at the Parana delta, where I saw my first free living hummingbird. We talked a lot together, walked through many different parts of town and ate together. I spent three nice days in Buenos Aires.

I wrote to all the host in the Bariloche region, but no one answered. In Bariloche I still tried to

phone them, but the phone numbers were not correct. This happens throughout the world and this is what makes traveling with Servas difficult. Many email addresses change, as well as telephone numbers, so you invest a lot of time with sometimes little or no result.

In Chile I contacted all hosts with email and only one responded and I stayed with him 5 months later in La Serena, which was very nice. It is always rewarding when you can get together, but its a lot of work. Also because I do not know where I will be the next day, so planning is a bit difficult, but that is my problem of course.

In Argentina I contacted one host in Mendoza and stayed in his unfinished house. Quite an experience. We really were similar in many ways, so I have very good memories with this contact, although we did not spent time together during the day. Later I was invited by someone on the street in Mendoza and this was very interesting as well. It really helps when you can speak Spanish, because many host do not speak English well. I did hardly speak any English with my hosts in South America.

In Cordoba I met the coordinator, who could really play and sing with the guitar. I did not learn any of these songs, although it would have been nice. He wrote me a letter of recommendation to talk with the environmental section of the university, so I got into contact with other people through him and I still have contact with them. On one of the tours I did I met people and lived with them for 5 days which was very pleasant. So even without Servas you can meet people in South America. In Rosario I met four different Servas people. All very different and pleasant in their own ways, although sometimes you can not get through very well. Probably because of my rigid way of ecological life.

In Entre Rios I met Servas people who could not accommodate me, but gave the address of a friend with a hostel and the name of a nature guide in National Park (NP) El Palmar. This ranger was very knowledgeable and we did some bird watching and saw 40 types of birds in 4 hours. In total I saw about 50 different types of birds in this NP.

I did not have any host list of Paraguay, so I did not contact anyone here. I contacted several people in Uruguay, but the weather was terrible, so I went to visit them later in January.

In Peru I got little response either. Many emails came back, but I had great experiences in this country with Servas in Trujillo. I was allowed to

teach about the environment at Ysabel's school and I taught many classes from 5 years to 16 years old. This in 6 days time. I slept three nights at Ysabel's place (very pleasant and active person) and later at the school director's place. I went afterwards to Ciclayo and was warmly welcomed as well. There was another Servas guest from Australia at the same time, but I was allowed to stay as well, because the other Servas people in Lambayaque and Ciclayo did not have space or time. Here I was at an environmental meeting with my host and was asked to speak for a short time and spoke about 5 minutes and answering questions for an other 10-15 minutes. Very good opportunities you get with Servas.

I contacted other people and had some contacts, but this time was not suitable for them. In Piura I tried to contact Elizabeth, but couldn't. One month later I still spent some time with her and her family during my time waiting for the bus to leave to Lima. There was another Servas traveler, Isabel from Canada, as well.

I read in the South American Servas news that Ecuador had Servas hosts again and I was the first one who could travel in this new Servas country. I met 5 host (families) and wrote to all of them (with email), but only a few replied. I stayed with them or had just a meal together or a short talk. A very rich experience. Warm people.

On International Environmental Day 4 October, I was allowed to speak about the environment at a school again. This time in Quito. I feel very privileged that I may do this. On my way back to Patagonia for the spring and the whales, I traveled fast, but had two nights in Tacna with a nice family who even showed me around town and to the petroglyphs, 2500 years old rock inscriptions. All in all it is worth the effort, but host list should really be updated every year, because otherwise travelers might not like to travel with Servas a lot.

Peter Boers,

Peter_boers1@hotmail.com

Formal member of the Dutch Servas Committee and very active Servas host and traveler.

CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED

I thank the people who have confirmed that they received the newsletter, as well as those who gave recommendations for improving it. I also appreciate the congratulations which motivate me to continue and to keep improving. **Many thanks:**

Silvia Kaltman, Graciela Faiman, Pablo Chufeni and Raul Pato Duek from Argentina. Alvaro

Soto and Claudia Merino from Chile. Hada Garcia, Nani Munoz, Patricia Vigil, Abigail Carrasco and Nelly Tolentino from Peru and Florencia Giacosa from Uruguay.

Susan Ovington – USA July 27, 2005

Pedro: I live in San Francisco, California. I met Roberto a few weeks ago and he showed me the newsletter. It looks very interesting to me; congratulations for this first issue; I know that it has been an enormous amount of work. I offered to translate it into English. It would be very interesting for people who want to go to South America.

Mabel Villamizar – Colombia, July 6, 2005

I am very happy with the achievement, certainly the exchange will be good for all of us. A hug and again, congratulations.

Marcela Bonilla – Colombia, July 11, 2005

Pedro: I congratulate you all for initiating this; it requires effort and will. I would suggest that you not use the newsletter to air disputes or internal matters concerning the leaders of Servas. Better if the articles serve to spread a feeling of friendship among the members of a country or the experiences of both travelers and hosts, such as those that you included in the issue sent.

Cintia Amor – NS, Argentina, July 4, 2005

CONGRATULATIONS FOR THE NEWS LETTER! I have already sent it by e-mail to members of Servas Argentina and it is generating verrrry favorable comments!!!!

Griselda Splivalo – Argentina, July 8, 2005

Roberto: I congratulate you for the Newsletter; it is very interesting to know the details of Servas in each country. Only someone who is or was in a Servas position knows the enormous amount of work that is entailed in every task completed.

Raul Pato Duek – Argentina, July 8, 2005

Congratulations! Thanks for bringing us all the information collected with dedication and hard work. It's all great and brings us closer to SERVAS and to South America.

Vivero Loma Verde – Argentina, July 4, 2005

How hard you have worked! I was interested by everything I read, the stories told by travelers and hosts. I live in Esquel-Chubut. I think I am the host farthest south (in the world?). Greetings of PEACE to all.

Joel Poblete – Chile, July 10, 2005

Dear Pedro: I have just read it, and I congratulate you and all the members who have collaborated with this great and necessary enterprise. I have been in Servas for only a few months, but reading this newsletter filled me with dreams and hopes. The experiences that are related are so beautiful, and from what I see there are still a great many tasks to be done. I feel very proud and honored to be on the Servas list in Chile.

Claudia Merino – Chile, July 7, 2005

It seems to me that it is very well put together; it's a good idea to include what's happening in each Latin American country. Congratulations and thanks from me.

Omar Calderon – Peru, July 7, 2005

Pedrito – My congratulations for the newsletter. I think it is a big effort to make 16 pages in small print, aside from getting the articles and all the details so that it comes together.

Hada Garcia Peru, July 7, 2005

It is very interesting, since it lets us know what is happening in SERVAS on the South American level; each one of the articles has its own importance, and I am delighted by the work that SERVAS YOUTH is doing.

Fernando Ugarte – NS, Peru, July 4, 2005

Roberto: My sincere congratulations for the newsletter; it's a great step forward for our area. I take the liberty of suggesting that you pay attention to the handling of the newsletter. Although it certainly is a tool for communication and information, it could also be used later on for other interests.

Licenia Rocha – Peru, July 4, 2005

My congratulations to each and every one of those who participated in one way or another to make this newsletter a reality.

I liked very much the colloquial language with which it was done; the effort to try to keep the Servas members informed is great, especially when PERU is involved in doing it.

I'm now in Miami; this newsletter makes me feel closer to Servas. Again, congratulations.

Victor Hugo Diaz – Peru, July 7, 2005

I also confirm having received the newsletter; I have printed it but have not finished it...it is quite long and a good start. Congratulations...at last we are exporting!

Anita Kalbermann – Uruguay, July 10, 2005

I want to congratulate you for this first informative newsletter. I'm glad that so many

people described their experiences. The most contagious enthusiasm was that of Cristina Monmany about Cuba. I promise to collaborate with Pablo Chufeni from Rosario, whom we elected as winner in that South American competition in February 2004 during the meeting in Uruguay that was so successful. Surely Bariloche will be even better, with that previous experience. Let's continue working in and for Peace, with cordial greetings to all people of good faith.

Karina Guerrero – Uruguay, July 1, 2005
Pedro and Roberto: CONGRATULATIONS!!!!
I think you have done an excellent job. I also congratulate all those who have worked on and supported the newsletter and who have contributed material to make it possible.

Magdalena Vidal – Uruguay, July 1, 2005
I like very much to see things well done, and I only have one comment, with respect to my having left my post a year ago. It really wasn't that I left my post but that the situation with the leaders of Servas Uruguay was wearing me out so much that, little by little, the post was leaving me! "Still calling for the true SERVAS spirit."

Marcelo Gularte – Uruguay, July 20, 2005
It seems to me an excellent idea; a medium like this was needed to allow us to transcend borders not just physically, and to share experiences and points of view, and that remains a fundamental part of the Servas spirit.

Mary Ann Thompson – Uruguay, July 1, 2005
I have had excellent experiences in Europe and Asia through Servas, and I have received 7 travelers in total, in my house in Punta del Este as well as in Montevideo.
I like the newsletter's evaluation of Servas and I believe it's necessary to look inward to find solutions.

Dinorah Sanz – Uruguay, June 29, 2005
I think the idea of having a South American newsletter is marvelous! Congratulations for doing it!
I believe communication between us South Americans is important, but it's also important to reinforce our presence in Servas International so as to interest members from other continents in coming, and to let them know us a little more through the articles.
I liked everything, but I would like to see more conceptual articles as well as the travelers' reports. I think that there are many issues that we must resolve in order to grow and we need to

handle together the growth problems of each country.

Greetings of Peace in Servas! From Montevideo

Florencia Giacosa – Uruguay, August 6, 2005
The newsletter is very good; when will the next one be? Greetings from San Jose.

Magiari Diaz – Venezuela, July 4, 2005

Many thanks for this gift!

1. The articles that I liked most are:
"Cuba, a dream of 4 letters" by Cristina Monmany, beautiful poetry to Cuba and Cubans; "Servas Group from Rosario is a Pioneer in the Youth Exchange Project". Excellent work done by Servas Rosario, Pablo Chufeni and his team. Servas Youth and its youth exchange program for language learning is really stimulating for us young people. I hope that will be expanded to our country; I would love to have the chance to participate as that Brazilian girl did!
"Carrying Out a Mission" – beautiful lesson about dedication and friendship.
"From Uruguay to the Old Continent" – genuine and appealing story!

2. The articles that I liked least: "Servas Venezuela Has Offered to Host the General Assembly"
It alarms me for Servas as a non-governmental organization to get involved in any kind of political interests. The peace and friendship professed by Servas are and should be kept above the level of all the political vicissitudes that we go through in our countries as citizens of the world. It is better not to get into any venture that could alter this mission and vision.

Florencio Gomez – Deputy, Venezuela, July 8, 2005

Dear Pedro: I congratulate you on this achievement, even though there are discrepancies and inexactitudes in the contents, especially about Venezuela, which I attribute to the South American Coordinator, who has spent a good part of his time communicating with EXCO and key persons, refuting positions taken by our country and accepting other insulting points of view, including those from a member from your country; we have not received a response to our request to the National Secretary of Peru about this.

NOTE:

For reasons of space, not all the correspondence received is published, and those that are published have been shortened. Sorry!